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EC 43: The Churches In The Third World
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Final Term Paper;

ON KOREAN CHRISTIAN EVANGELICAL REVIVAL ASSOCIATION (한국 예수회 전도관 부흥협회)
which is commonly called as "Olive Tree Movement" or "Faith-Town Movement"
or " Elder Park's church"

Hak-Kwon Lee
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OLIVE-TREE CHURCH
Elder Park's Son

A

I Introduction

The superstructure of modern cultism is built upon the foundation of past religious speculations. As Solomon expressed it "There is no new thing under the sun...is there anything whereof it may be said, see, this is new? it had been already of old time, which was before us " (Eccles 1:9,10) While each cult claims to have newly revealed truth, most are syncretistic coalescences of beliefs borrowed from the religious systems which superseded them.

Modern cults often borrow bits and pieces from each other, or trace their lineage directly to the classic religious of human. Even when a cult may not have an ^bobvious link with a major religious system, the inherent nature of its teaching indicates roots in a faith of the past. When the Christian Scientists⁷ denies the existence of matter, they owe a debt of gratitude to the Hindu philosophy which expounded the concept of Maya (referring to the illisory nature of the material world).

Most of the cults display, also, sincere expressions of a humble ^edesire to better society and follow God's will. Hence, it is not strange that many such groups often originate in unstable social circumstances and the people who seek out a cult or ^{become} ensnared by cult propaganda are ^{often} socially unstable and oppresed. Professor Man Yol Yi said,

Generally cults are thoroughly beneficial religions and, in some sense, ^{it is} religions of the oppressed. People who failed while trying to live honestly, who could not escape poverty while working hard, who are plundered while struggling to live justly, who have failed at love or marriage, who failed at social competition, who have incurable diseases, who are treated coldly in the existing churches, these are people who are easily attracted to the slogans and propaganda of cults.₁

Traditional religions and social instability are some of the dominant phenomena of the Third World, and, as consequence, the phenomena of cults

are one of the challenges that the Church in the Third World faces. Korea is not exception and it is impossible to discuss Christianity in Korea without mentioning the cults in Korea. According to Myeong Whan Tahk, the director of The International Religions Research Institute, before 1900, there were only four cults in Korea, but ~~it~~^{they had} become sixteen by 1920, then 30 by 1940, and one hundred and sixty-eight by 1965 (1945-65, this period ^{from} was ~~one of~~^a most unstable time ⁱⁿ of Korea, ~~which~~^{it} began with the Independence of Korea and included ^{the} Korean War); then, by 1980 ~~it~~^{they} become three hundred and twenty.² Among those cults the majority ~~is the~~^{were} groups which have their roots in Christianity (see appendix #1)

^{The} Korean Christian Evangelical Revival Association (KCERA; 한국 예수교 전도관 부흥 협회), which is commonly ^{known} called ^{as} Olive Tree Movement (감람 나무교), is ~~one of the~~^a representative ^{of} Christian lineage cults in Korea ~~which~~^{and} is also one of the largest groups among 320. This paper will ~~be~~ concentrate ^{on an} to analyze ^{the} KCERA as ~~one of the~~^a possible way to ^Y Korean cults.
Study

II. History

A. A Brief Record of the Founder

Tai Sun Park ^(박대선?) was born in Pyeongan Bukdo, Korea in 1915. His father, who was a poor farmer, squandered all his inheritance away ~~with~~ gambling and drinking alcohol. ~~His~~^{The} father, for more than ten years, ~~had~~^{had} never come ^a to home unless he needed money. When Park was nine, his mother died and a few months later his father also died, so Park and his only older brother, Tai Kuk Park became orphans. As orphans they went to their town church ~~sunday~~ school. At this church, Park heard the story which gave him an indirect motive to found KCERA later. In the Sunday school he heard the story of Rev. Gu Whag Whang (황구확) who was the minister of another

church in that area. Rev. Whang was ^a pious and graceful ^{who} man ~~and he~~ foretold the time of his ^{own} death and ~~he~~ died at ^{that precise} the time peacefully while the church members ~~are~~ gathered at his deathbed. After Park heard the story, Park was so impressed, so ~~that~~ he said "I always wished to die like ^{an} angel ever since I heard Rev. Whang's story."

After he ^{from} graduated elementary school, he went to Japan to continue his study. Because he did not have enough money, he underwent ^{many} hardships. He worked ^{and} during the day went to a technical school at night. Sometimes, he could not read the letters on the blackboard, because of malnutrition. Even he went hungry for two ^{or} three days when he lost his job. He tried suicide four times but ^{each time} whenever he tried, the Sunday school teaching that if you ^{commit} suicide you go hell came into his mind, ~~and~~ that prevented him from ~~suicide~~ killing himself.

After he ^{from} graduated ~~the~~ technical school, he began to manage a small domestic factory; however, the bombings of the Second World War ^{were} too severe ^{and} in Japan, he came back to Seoul. At Seoul, he went to Nam-Dai-Moon church (남대문 교회), and he believed so zealously and enthusiastically, ~~he~~ ~~Park~~ soon became a deacon. While attending Nam-Dai-Moon church, he once attended Rev. Seong Bong Lee's revival meeting (이성봉 목사 부흥회). At the meeting, he was inspired deeply that he later said " it was the first time in twenty-one years of my religious life, I was ~~de~~ ^{de}ply touched by Holy Spirit."⁴ After that experience, he ^e immediately went to fast for three days and at the dawn of the third day he ^c confessed all his sins and received "fire".⁵ After that, he said that he experienced many special gifts from God including the experience of drinking the "living water" which ^v later ^{is} used as medicine in KCERA.⁶

(I must stop at this point correcting your English. You actually do very well on it, but all students make mistakes in a foreign language, as I do when I try to write Korean. - 3 - Ask some American friend to finish correcting the English. It will be a good learning experience. These minor mistakes in English that you make will not affect your grade

B. Birth of KCREA

Park moved to Chang-Dong church(창동 교회), and Nam-Dai-Moon church, and he was ordained as an elder at Chang-Dong church. After his ordination, Park had held his crusade starting with the Seoul Mu-Hak church(무학교회) revival meeting through Pusan, Daegu, Daejeon, and ending with on Seoul Han river sands(서울한강백사장) revival meeting, from January 1 to 7 in 1955. This crusade was successful and sensatinal. Even though it is not confirmable, many of the participants of the crusade said that they saw fire coming from Heaven and from Park's mouth, and they smelled a very fragrant smell while Park was preaching. Also, they said that they saw many miraculous healing including the healing of blinds and cripples.⁷ From March 26 to April 5 in 1955, Park held the famous Nam mountain revival meeting, and many points of his preaching was not acceptable to existing churches. In July 1955, Korean Christian Association(한국 기독교 연합회) announced KCREA as cultic religious movement, and on February 15, 1956. Kyeongki Presbytery of Korean Presbyterian church(대한 예수교 장로회 경기노회) announced KCREA as heretic. In counter action, Park withdrew from Korean Presbyterian church in June 1955 and on the first day of next month, July 1, 1955, he founded KCERA, and he continued his revival meetings throughout whole nation. (You should indicate the source of these facts in a footnote)

C. The proclamation of Park

April 30, 1957, Park declared that heavenly authority is given to him in his preaching, and May 18 of the same year, he asserted that the sign of grace appeared in his picture, with a fabricated picture.⁸ In the same year June 9, he declared that himself as vegetability and hence, that he is the true olive tree(Zechariah 4:11-14, Revelation 11:4).⁹ On September 1, 1957 he announced the establishment of Faith-Town(신앙촌), and

also proclaimed that only those who come into Faith-Town would be saved from the Judgment of the last day and began to recruit the applicants.¹⁰ On October 23 in the same year, he declared himself as "One from the east" (Isa.41:2), and on 25 of the same month he declared that the existing churches are the palace of devils so that there is no salvation, and only in KCREA there is salvation.¹¹

April 6 1958, Park proclaimed that Jesus would come back to his Faith-Town at Sosa, Kyeongki Do as the Second coming.¹² December 21 of the same year, he insisted that Manna came from heaven to his Faith-Town and declared himself as one who will seized and bound devils and Satan into the bottomless pit.¹³ He was put in prison twice, from December 29, 1958 to March 26, 1960 and from January 27, 61 to January 10, 1962 for the suspicion of violence, illegal election, promiscuous sex and embezzlement; however, it is, he insisted, the necessary suffering of righteous in this evil world.¹⁴ Besides the proclamations about himself, he also made several economical declarations. March 20, 1958 he declared that the wealth of U.S.A. is moving toward Korea so that all gold would come into Korea. August 10 of the same year, he bragged that he would turn the water in Han river into oil, so that Korea will become the richest country.¹⁵ He, also asserted that he would give a car, a piano and a stereo set to each family who joined his Faith-Town.¹⁶

III. Doctrine and Assertion

The doctrine of KCREA, in one word, can be said as Park, who is "Spiritual Mother" in a way that God is Father, ^{centering on} ~~centered doctrine~~. Park is "one who from the east" (Isa.41:2) and by his appearance the end time has begun; therefore, the Second coming of Jesus and the Last Judgment is imminent. This eschatological assertion is based on the literary interpretation, and subjective and mysterious experience of Park.

Park is "one from the east whom victory meets at every step"(Isa.41:2) according to KCREA, because he is the one who fulfilled the prophecy of that verse. First, the "east" in Isaiah 41:2 is also described as the place of "rising of the sun"(Isaiah 41:25), and as ends of the earth(Isa.41:9). Since, from the ancient time, Korea has been called as "the east country of rising sun" and Korea is the eastern end of Asian continent, the "east" in Isaiah is Korea. Moreover, in Isaiah 41:1, God says "Listen to me in silence, O coastlands" and Korea is the land which is surrounded by the coastlands of China and Japan;thus, according to KCREA, the "east" must be Korea. Second, "one" in Isaiah 41:2, is described as "one from the north" in 41:25. Hence, "one" has to be someone from Korea and, at the same time from the north. And that "one" is Park, because he is Korean who came from North Korea.¹⁷

Also, since Park himself declared as vegetability not animality, he is obviously the only one who can fulfill the prophecy of "Olive Tree" in Zecharian 4:11-14 and Revelation 11:4. Thus, he is the olive tree.¹⁸

Hosea 14:5-7 is one of the central Scripture passage and that says "I will be as the dew to Israel;he shall blossom as the lily,..." KCREA interpretes as following: The Sprit of God descends like dew upon Park who is the one from east and olive tree, and the Spirit will be poured upon the followers of Park. Then, their minds which like wildernes shall be changed "as the poplar"(14:5); they shall "flowrish as a garden" (14:7);and they shall "blossom as the lily".¹⁹ The identity of Park is clearly expressed in The International Christian News, the official newspaper of KCREA. The International Christian News on September 29, 1969 published an article which says,

Apostle Peter, John and Paul did not know what the meaning of

"I will be as the dew to Israel". Jesus saw it but he did not speak of it, because only one who receives the Spirit like dew can speak of it and only one who pours the Spirit out can talk about it. The grace like dew is the gift of pouring out Spirit in the second chapter of Joel, and the one who pours the Spirit out is the one who shall complete the end time. He shall point out the sins of the world and will sweep out it. He shall perform miracles with greater authority, and with him the time of end shall begin.

Those who receive the grace of him shall blossom as the lily.. they shall be wise maidens who prepared oil for the bridegroom and they shall enter the Kingdom at the time of the Second coming.

Today, almost two-thousand years later, the olive tree who received the Spirit finally appeared. He will prepare the way for those who accept the pouring out grace of him and exert to clean themselves to prepare the way for the Second coming Jesus. However, those who scorn and reject him will repent and lament, and will be miserable ones at the time of the Second Coming...

Therefore, Park is the ambassador plenipotentiary of God who came to the earth to prepare the way for the Second coming Jesus, by gathering 144,000 of just people. When the number of 144,000 is filled in his Faith-Town Jesus will return to the Faith-Town and the millenium will be built right at his Faith-Town, which is "New Jerusalem"(Revelation 21:2-10).

KCREA also divide the sin into three kinds: original sin which was imputed from Adam; the sin which was inherited from the ancestors; and one's own sin. These three sins are able to be redeemed, only through the olive tree who received the Spirit of water. Therefore, after the appearance of ~~the Spirit of water~~ ^{the Spirit of blood, the Spirit of fire and} olive tree, the only way to receive salvation is through olive tree and the only place to receive eternal life at this end time is Faith-Town. On August 2, 1960, KCREA confirmed the constitution which includes eight articles of faith. In the fourth article, olive tree is defined as promised Paraclete Spirit and in the fifth and sixth articles, the salvation, eternal life and resurrection are attainable only by receiving the complete Spirit through olive tree.²¹

KCTRA took aggressive attitude toward existing churches that the ministers of the existing churches are sons of devil, and no members of the existing churches can enter the Kingdom of millenium. The basis of this

assertion is the interpretation of Revelation 11:2. Park interpretes "the court outside the temple" in Revelation 11:2 is the Church of the perverts which the lampstand is removed. And that Church is the existing Church.²² Park is also very aggressive toward Calvinism which is one of the most important base of the Korean existing churches. Park sees God as the failure of His redemption plan.²³ Naturally, he denies God's divine providence of predestination, and defined Calvin as the chief of devils.²⁴ He defined Adam as Adam of failure and Jesus as Adam of success. He also sees the temptation of the wilderness not as the providence but as deceitful plan of Satan. Hence, if Jesus was fallen into the temptation, he would have also been the failure.²⁵

IV. The Present Condition of KCREA

The headquarters of KCREA is presently at the second Faith-Town which is located at Kyungki-Do Yangjoo-Gun Wabu-Myun Deogso-Ri 5-8. There are two more Faith-Towns; the first Faith-Town at Sosa, and the third Faith-Town at Gijang. There are several statistics about the number of members of KCERA, and it varies from 1,300,000 to only 26,000. On Cho-Seon Weekly (September 27,80), the number of KCERA was reported as one million by newsman Park, and in the article, The Landing of Faith-Town, by journalist Baik in the Se-Dai magazine in August 1980, it is reported as one million and three hundred thousands.²⁶ These statistics are reported simply according to their interviews with the officials of KCERA. Hence, they are very subjective numbers, and the numbers which are reported by objective investigations are much less than them. According to the statistic of Religion department in the Ministry of Civil Service(문화 공보부), by May 1980, the number of members is seven-hundred thousands; however, the statistic is still based on the own report of each organization with little proof. The number is shockingly reduced when we turn our attention to purely

objective investigation. According to professor Kang-O Lee of Jeon-Buk University, the direct of Korean New Religion Research Institution, the number of members is only seventy thousand, and according to Myeong Whan Tahk, the direct of The International Religious Research Institute, it is only thirty five thousands by August 1980.²⁷ Moreover, the former executive of KCERA who withdrew from KCERA, elder KangWoo Lee, affirmed the number as only twenty-six thousand in his testimony (see appendix #2).

In my opinion, since the circulation of The International Christian News which is supplied to every member of KCERA is about twenty thousand,²⁸ it is reasonable its assume the number around thirty thousands.

Even though the ideal of Faith-Town was to establish a classless equal society, the price of moving into Faith-Town-house varies from twelve thousand whan(about twenty-five dollars) to ten million whan(about twenty thousand dollars).²⁹ There are certain conditions to be the resident of Faith-Town, it is required to have the accomplishment of more than one year service at a local evangelical hall(전도관 :they call their church as evangelical hall) with a recommendation of a evangelical leader(전도사) of a local evangelical hall. Only the first Faith-Town residents have qualification to enter the second Faith-Town, and only the second Faith-Town residents can move into the third Faith-Town.³⁰ Of course, a good recommendation is always necessary condition.

The administration system of KCERA is a struit hierarchy. Even though Park is called as Elder Park by outsiders, in KCERA, Park's official designation is Spiritual Mother. Under Spiritual Mother there are eleven chief Dokwan(^(provincial districts)도관) at eleven provinces and under Dokwan, there are several Cichal districts(^{sub. districts}시찰 구역). Under Cichal district there are local evangelical halls, and each evangelical hall is directed by a evangelical leader(

전도사) according to the supervision of the headquarters. There is no minister system in KCERA, although in case of conversion of a ministers they continue to call them as minister. The training of evangelical leaders(전도사) is done through a short term training course of each Dokwan, and after Park's confirmation they are ordained and appointed as evangelical leaders by Park.

V. Conclusion

For the last fourth^y years, Korea has been one of the foremost battle ground in the war of the cults versus Christianity. On the one hand, more and more people in Korea has been committing themselves to a Christian faith, on the other hand, the struggle with cults has been severer. Today, it is a great task of Korean Church that is to study, to know, to understand the cults, so that the Church may be armed with the proper information and knowledge at the battle, with hope to guide and educate the members of cults into right path of faith and healthy theological understanding.

As all modern people, Korean people suffers today from the moral vacuum created in part by technology's triumph; moreover, many of them are afflicted with social and political instability and economical poverty. It provides an effective ground for the cult propaganda, and KCERA is a good example which shows how a cult sprouts and grows. All the promises that Park declares and all the security that Park guarantees are i.e., salvation, eternal life, Kingdom of Heaven are the promises that suppose be declared by the church of Jesus Christ. Many people who joined KCERA are the people who suffered the spiritual thirst and who needed to be freed from their oppression. Then, an obvious question why the existing churches could not declare the promises and provide the need of the people arises.

Honestly, Korean Church has been busy at just condemning all cults without

studying, knowing and understanding. However, it is time to, first, admit that the appearance of the cults as mostly the responsibility of existing churches to discuss and re-direct them into healthy faith life. By humanistic standards, the members of KCERA are usually more enthusiastic and zealous than anyone else. It is not doubtable that, at least in my opinion, if existing churches were not lazy at proclaiming the promise of God and good news of Jesus Christ, the members of cults would have been good brothers and sisters of us. Rather than just condemning them as heretics, it is time to open the door for talk. Secondly, it is time that requires Christian Church to educate the basic doctrine to her sheeps. Especially for Korean Church in which members are frequently synthesize their belief consciously and unconsciously with traditional thoughts and beliefs, it is urgent and necessary to teach and make her members certain about what they believe. Also, in my opinion, it is the task of church to educate the basics of representative traditional heresies of whose false doctrines continuously and repeatedly appear in the modern cults. And those are; Ebionites, Docetism, Cerinthus, Montanism, Arianism, Pelagianism, and A part of Nestorius.

It is one of the important task of the Churches in the Third World to guide and re-direct the members of cults into healthy faith life; moreover, to safeguard and prevent her sheeps and people in outside of church not to fall into the false beliefs.

Good use of material which is difficult to obtain. Your concluding remarks are excellent, and very timely. I will not count your mistakes in English in the grade.

A-

APPENDIX

1: Data of New Religions in Korea

October 30, 1976.

Lineage from	# of Sect	Number of members	
		Acco. to own report	Acco. to IRRI
Christianity	67	1,484,762	141,362
Buddhism	48	5,198,717	828,458
Dan-Goon(단군교)	32	563,227	67,749
Zeung-San(증산교)	56	207,413	40,897
Dong-Hak(동학교)	16	870,279	70,735
Japan (일본계)	18	2,380,534	564,015
Taoism (도교)	5	486,564	42,265
Mul-beob(물법교)	16	342,545	31,775
Gak-Sei-Do(각세도)	10	308	308
Jeong-Yeok(정역교)	7	724	724
Folk Rel.(무속계)	19	2,678	2,678
Unidentified (소속 불명)	15	87,213	23,928

Unit: person.

Acco to own: According to their own report to Religion Department

Acco to IRRI: According to The International Religion Research Institution

APPENDIX

2: Data on the number of Members of KCERA

November 20, 1980

Province	# Of church	# of clergy	Number of Members	
			Rel. Dep.	Kangwoo Lee
Seoul (서울)	164	147	59,040	5,000
Pusan (부산)	38	39	14,860	800
Kyeonggi(경기)	372	322	176,520	12,500
Kangwon (강원)	138	110	50,080	500
Chungbuk(충북)	99	82	36,630	500
Chungnam(충남)	186	157	68,820	700
Jeonbuk (전북)	135	115	50,000	1,000
Jeonnam (전남)	273	250	100,000	1,700
Kyeongbuk(경북)	183	133	67,710	1,000
Kyeongnam(경남)	176	156	76,620	1,500
Jeajoo (제주)	4	4	240	100
Total	1,768	1,515	700,520	26,300

Unit: person

Rel. Dep. : According to the Religion department in the Ministry of Civil Service.

Kangwoo Lee: According to the former executive of KCERA, elder Kangwoo Lee.

*You are particularly good in ym
critical use of statistics*

FOOTNOTES

1. Man Yol Yi, Korean Christianity and Historical Consciousness, Seoul Korea, Jisik Co., 1981, p.127.
2. Myeong Whan Tahk, The Letter from the Hell, Seoul Korea, Jungeum Seolim, 1980, p.256.
3. Ibid., p.108.
4. Myeong Whan Tahk, New Religions in Korea, Seoul Korea, Jungeum Seolim, 1980, p.109.
5. Seong Yeo Kim, The Miracles and Mysterious Experience of Elder Park, Seoul Korea, Sincheonji Co., 1955, p.78.
6. Ibid., p.78.
7. Jong Suk Lee, New Religions, Sin-Dong-A, vol. 72, Seoul Korea, Dong-A News Inc., 1970, p.237.
8. Ibid., p.241.
9. M.W. Tahk, New Religions in Korea, p.111.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. J.S. Lee, p.238.
15. M.W. Tahk, New Religions in Korea, p.112.
16. Ibid.
17. Nam Sun Kwan, The Interpretation of One from East and Oliver Tree, Pusan Korea, Seong Kwang Co., 1958, p.89.
18. Ibid., p.91.
19. Ibid.,138.
20. M.W. Tahk, New Religions in Korea, p.114.
21. Ibid., p.115.
22. Ibid., p.120.

23. Ibid., p.119.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. M.Y. Yi, p.127.
27. Ibid., p.128.
28. M.W. Tahk. New Religions in Korea, p.123.
29. J.S. Lee, p.244.
30. Ibid.

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2. The Letter from the Hell, Myeong Whan Tahk, Seoul Korea, Jungeum Seolim, 1980.
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7. Cults, Bob Larson, Wheaton Illinois, Tyndale House Publishers, 1982.
8. New Religions, Jong Suk Lee, Sin-Dong-A, vol.72, Seoul Korea, Dong-A Daily News Inc., 1970.

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